FORTVNES FASHION,

Pourtrayed in the troubles of the *Ladie Elizabeth Gray, wife to* EDWARD the fourth.

Written by Tho. Samson.

LONDON,
Printed for *William Iones*, and are to be sold at his shop at White-crosse streete end by the Church.
1613.

FORTVNES
FASHION,

Pourtrayed in the troubles of the
Lady Elizabeth Grey, wife to
EDWARD the fourth.

Written by Tho. Sampson.

BRITISH MUSEUM
45.
6. 30
530.

LONDON,

Printed for William Iones, and are to be sold at his shop
at White-crosse-streete end by the Church.

1613.

TO HIS MANY WAIES INDEERED FRIEND Mr. *Henry Pilkington of Gadsby, in the Countie of Leicester, Gentleman.*

SIR, this Tragicall history being no fiction, but a true relation of the many troubles of a distressed Queene, I offer to your patronage for two especiall causes; the one, for the long continued loue betweene vs; the other, for that I know your name is a sufficient protection for it and me, against the many find-faults that this age is pestered with, who themselues being not able, or too idle to do any thing worth the reading, yet are composed of such a snarling substance, that nothing can escape their eye or eare without a scoffe: how euer it displeaseth such, I care not; if it content you, I haue my desire,

not doubting but when you are wearied with more serious studies, you will at some times peruse this. And so I leaue you to liue happily.

Your assured friend

THO. SAMPSON.

The Argument for the better vnderstanding of the Readers.

WHen Henry the sixt king of that name in England, was by the Earle of Warwicke, and others, thought vnmeete to gouerne the kingdome: and Edward the fourth claimed the Crowne, in a battell neere to Saint Albans: Henry the sixt was taken prisoner in the 39 yeare of his reigne, Anno Dom. 1461. All king Henries forces were slaine, or put to flight, amongst whom was slain on king Henries part, one Sir Iohn Gray, husband of this Lady Elizabeth Gray, of whose troubles this historie now discourseth. This Lady was after maried to king Edward the fourth: she was daughter to the Lady Iaquet, daughter to Peter Earle of Saint Paul, neece to the Lord Lewis of Leutzenbrugh, which Lady Iaquet was first married to Iohn Duke of Bedford and Regent of France; and afterward she was married to Sir Richard Woodvile Lord Riuers, by whom she had this Lady Elizabeth and others. When king Edward was setled in his kingdome, and had imprisoned Henry the sixt in the Tower of London: the Earle of Warwicke was sent into France, to intreate a marriage betweene King Edward the fourth and the Lady Bona, daughter to Lewis Duke of Sauoy, and sister to the Lady Carlot then wife to the French King, in whose Court this Lady Bona then was: which motion was well liked of by the French King, and all things sorted to the Earle of Warwicks desire. But in the meane time, while these things were working in France, King Edward going to his Manner of Grafton, in the countie of Northampton; in the time

of the Kings remaining there, this Lady Gray was an humble suter to the King, that she might haue her ioynter giuen her; which because her husband was slaine on King Henries part, was since his death detained from her. King Edward liked her so well, that after many amorous discourses she was married to him at Graston, where first he fancied her. The Kings mother and many of the Nobilitie did dislike of this mariage, because she was a widow, and his subiect. This King was married to this Lady Gray, before the Earle of Warwicke was returned from France, which some say, who will talke much and know little, was the cause of the warres afterwards betweene the King and the Earle. But the Earles hatred against the King was for another cause, as in the Chronicles you may reade. What troubles and griefe happened to this Queene in the time of her husband the Kings life, and after his death, you may imagine. You see her newly risen out of her graue, and in the extremity of her griefe speaking as followeth.

The

The troubles of the Ladie *Elizabeth Gray wife to Edward the fourth.*

SOmetime I was, vnhappie was that time,
Wherein I liu'd, and neuer tasted ioyes,
That did not wither, ere they were in prime:
Honors are such vncertaine fading toyes.
I was king Edwards wife, a wofull Queene,
As in this history may plaine be seene.

O had my loue in my first choice remaind,
How happie had I bene, from griefe how free:
Of wofull haps I neuer had complaind,
But that must needs be, that the fates decree.
The Cottage seated in the dale below,
Stands safe, when highest towers do ouerthrow.

My youth was blest in loue with equall choice,
The matter fit prepared for loues fier:
In which while I consum'd, nere did my voice,
Nor thoughts consent, to wish my fortunes higher.
Thus in the valley, whil'st my loue did rest,
My soule though lowly, none more highly blest.

But fatall powers, with vnreuerst decree,
Whom hecatombs of prayers may not perswade,
To adde one minute to the blisse they see,

Or

Or spare one day, what but a day was made:
Their course is fixt, and cannot be preuented,
They both abide their might, that are contented.

Whose power in the distressed crie was knowne,
When Edward fourth of name, obtaind the Crowne,
And put sixt Henry from his regall throne,
Raising himselfe by casting others downe.
Greedy Ambition, endlesse in desiring,
On others ruine foundeth her aspiring.

There first began the groundworke of my woe,
There lost I him that had my prime of loue:
And then the prime of sorrowes I did know,
In prime of ioy, which did more sorrowes moue.
The daintiest palate, with exactest skill,
Distasts the relish of the bitter pill.

There was my husband slaine on Henries part,
Then was I left a widow desolate:
Yet once againe, loue chose another dart,
Whose golden head I thought would raise my fate;
King Edwards loue I meane, but what ensude?
The Crowne I gain'd, I euer after rewde.

To Witchwood forrest when this King did go,
For his delight to hunt the fearfull Deere:
He went to Grafton; thence my second woe
Did spring, it was my hap then to be there,
Attendant on my mother, in which space,
I was an humble Suter to his Grace,

That he would please to pitie my estate,
That I might haue my ioynter giuen me:
Seeing my hopes were then so ruinate,
That I was like to taste of miserie.
Such was my case, except it were relieued:
At my complaint, he very much was grieued.

And mou'd with pitie, did commiserate
My cause, my selfe he seem'd to fancie then:
With gracious words lamenting my estate,
Bad me take comfort; ô the wiles of men!
He courted me, and I at last did yeeld,
My honor sau'd, that he should win the field.

A King to woo his subiect in such sort,
As no dishonor by his loue might rise:
Blame me not then, if to that princely port,
I was contented to be led as prize:
Where honor grac'd with regall maiestie,
Was Pilot to my ship in ieopardie.

Though long he sude, I granted at the last
To be his wife, such shew of honest loue
His princely heart did seeme to haue embrac'd:
I was content the nuptiall sports to proue.
No wanton lust did harbour in my thought,
Although too deare I haue my pleasure bought.

When it was bruted, that the King affected,
And would without the liking of his Lords
Espouse me; seeing that he not respected

Their discontent, nor smooth intreating words:
But like a loyall and a royall King,
Would still make good his vowes in euery thing.

Then they deuisde against me to obiect,
My widowhood, ô that was chiefly it,
Wherewith they thought me fouly to detect,
Alledging it was rare, and farre vnfit,
A King should fancie such a one as I,
That was a widow, and in pouertie.

But all in vaine they sought him to disswade,
He gaue his word, and constantly did stand,
Vnto the oathes betwixt vs firmly made,
With interchange of hearts, and gift of hand.
He did desire our marriage day to see,
And I did wish that time as much as he.

When the Kings mother thought it was in vaine,
To vse perswasions to her sonne the King:
A precontract she spared not to faine,
That he had made, his honor so to bring
Into reproch; supposing that the way,
From marriage a while to cause him stay.

But then the King those cauils did disproue,
And we at Grafton married were with speed:
And there with holy rites did seale our loue,
Which God and man allow as sacred deed.
There were we ioyn'd in holy mariage state,
Which during life should be inuiolate.

Whether the King did keepe his plighted faith
To me, as marriage ſtrictly doth require:
Or if it be that he it broken hath,
Which I to know, or proue, do not deſire:
I liu'd and lou'd him in ſuch duteous ſort,
As let my life and actions make report.

Before the Earle made his returne from France,
Being ſent to treate a mariage for the King
With Lady Bona, time brought forth this chance,
The King was married, which ſome ſay did bring
The fall and ruine of King Edwards ſeed,
(The vulgar peoples ſaying is no creed.)

Richard Neuil then Earle of Warwicke.

How dares a ſubiect contradict his King?
Muſt ſubiects wils limit their Princes loue?
It's more then vaine, yea a preſumptuous thing,
Inferiors ſhould ſuch bold commanders proue,
To tie Kings thoughes to fancie none but them
That pleaſe their ſubiects, ô aſpiring men!

What though things ſorted to the Earles deſire?
And Lewis Duke of Sauoy was content,
To grant as much as Warwicke did require:
Muſt princely Edward ſuffer baniſhment?
Or be obedient to his ſubiects frowne,
Or hazard all the glorie of a Crowne?

It was not this that cauſd the Earle rebell,
Nor was it conſcience of King Henries right
Another cauſe, ſome hiſtories do tell,

Enraged Warwicke, and did cauſe him fight
Againſt his King; yet Kings can giue no cauſe,
Sufficient motiues for the breach of lawes.

O neuer let ſucceeding ages heare
Vnto the ſtaine of his nobilitie,
The wauering faith that Warwicke then did beare,
Conſtant in nothing, but vnconſtancie:
Firſt fauouring one, then changed to the other,
Faithfull to none, although he were his brother.

Yet will I giue him, being dead, his due,
For ſure it is a ſinne to wrong the dead,
Though to his King he was vnkind, vntrue,
His valour was by vanitie miſled:
Who ſo him pleaſd, to raiſe vnto the Crowne;
And when he liſt, by force to caſt them downe.

A valiant Knight, and fortunate in warre,
Vlyſſes-like for prudent policie:
Yet this did all his other vertues marre,
And was a blot to his poſteritie,
That right or wrong he car'd not how it was,
But as he would, ſo things ſhould come to paſſe.

O no, another fire the world doth know,
Betwixt the King and Warwicke kindled was:
Which I by no meanes to the world will ſhow,
It was too much (if ſo it was) alas,
That ſuch a blot ſhould blemiſh ſuch a King,
That was ſo royall elſe in euery thing.

Ile nere beleeue that euer Edwards mind,
Would passe the limits of true honors name:
Although in histories you there may find,
Some things set downe that might empaire his fame:
I was his wife, he lou'd me as I thought,
I paid his loue with dutie, as I ought.

The next yeare after that we married were,
At Westminster I then was crowned Queene:
Attended there by many a noble Peere,
In such rare sort as at such times are seene.
My father and my friends he did aduance,
To greater place, but more vnhappie chance.

And in this yeare, into the world I brought
A daughter, which combin'd King Edwards loue
In double knot with mine: for sure 'tis thought
The pleasingst ioy that man and wife do proue,
When of their honest loues, such fruite they see,
As farre beyond all other treasures be.

But oh, what pleasure euer lasteth long:
Some enuious fate maligning that our blisse
Should long continue, with iniurious wrong
Did ouerthrow our mirth, and forc'd vs misse
The path that would haue led vs on to ioy,
And made vs tread the maze of all annoy.

To sowre our sweet, lo what mishap befell,
An insurrection in Northamptonshire:
Robin of Redsdale, curs'd impe of hell,

Who like ſome furie, with his hel-bred fire,
Enrag'd the madnes of the rebels ſo,
They like diſtracted men to Grafton go.

Where by the force of boiſterous curſed hand,
My father, then Earle Riuers, they did take:
My brother, Sir Iohn Woodvile, did withſtand
The rebels force, but oh he was too weake.
Farre ouermatch'd was ſonne and fathers force,
For without law, or iuſtice, or remorſe,

They in Northampton, each did loſe his head:
Nor Iudge, nor Iurie, had them ouerthrowne:
With cruell rigor was their ſentence read,
It nothing booted them to make their mone.
Thus an oblation to that furious faction,
Their blouds were made, ô moſt deteſted action!

Malicious Warwicke, in a ſhew of loue,
Wrapt his diſpleaſure at his Soueraignes match:
And gained leaue, for health freſh aire to proue,
When Serpent-like he time and meanes did watch,
To plucke King Edward from his throne inueſted,
That ſo the ſeeds of ciuill warre deteſted.

And ſubtilly with faire alluring words,
Did draw the hearts of all he could perſwade:
Not to obey, but to reſiſt with ſwords,
Their lawfull King, againſt the oath they made.
And ſo miſled the people, to attempt
That which with loſſe of liues they did repent.

See here the fickle minds the common sort
Of people beare, that not respecting right,
Nor iust succession, onely by report,
And light beliefe of others, bend their might,
Hazard their liues and lands, pollute their fame,
With shamefull blot of traitors hatefull name.

I grant my state was meane, yet not so base,
Iustly to be reputed odious:
Nor did I spring from such a seruile race,
As might moue VVarwicke to be trecherous
Vnto his King: for oft it hath bene seene,
As meane a Lady hath bene made a Queene.

But when vile rancor boyld in Warwicks breast,
He gladly tooke the simplest shew of cause,
To leuie armes; and neuer would giue rest
Vnto his thoughts, vntill against all lawes
He raisd an armie gainst King Edwards force,
And by ill fortune gaue the King the worse.

For in the night he sodainly surprisde
King Edwards tent neare Wolney, where the King
Litle suspecting what his foe deuisde,
Securely slept, but then oh piteous thing,
Hearing a noise he cald vnto his guard,
But they were slaine, and he was clapt in ward.

And thence from Warwicke, in the night conueyed
To Midlam Castle, where he did remaine:
There in the Bishops charge a while he stayed,

Vntill

Vntill he did for want of aire complaine:
And by that meanes had leaue for pleasure sake,
To hawke or hunt, the change of aire to take.

Which being once obtaind, King Edward thought
It was the high way to his libertie:
Plotting how this and that might best be wrought,
And not procure his keepers iealousie,
Ought to mistrust; tis hard for to deuise
A secret slight, to circumuent the wise.

Whether the Bishop of himselfe did giue
So large a scope vnto the captiue King:
Or Warwicks conscience inwardly did grieue,
That he had done so trecherous a thing:
And therefore will'd the Bishop let him haue,
What libertie soeuer he did craue.

Ile not dispute how it did come to passe,
Though many thinke, that Warwicke did consent
To set him free: but be it as it was,
All doubts to cleare, the King did soone preuent
The fury of his foes, with heedfull care,
To tread the path that might escape the snare.

And by good fortune it did happen so,
Sir William Stanley with a troupe of men,
Met with the King as he to hunt did go:
It was in vaine to argue where or when
He should be redelyuered, for decree
Had cleare resolu'd, to set King Edward free.

And thoſe that had the charge of his returne,
Vnto whoſe care the Biſhop did commit
The guarding of the King, were loth to ſpurne
Againſt the pricke, accounting it no wit
To offer force, where ſuch attempts were vaine,
Which raſh reſiſtance might procure their paine.

Determinately therefore they agreed,
With ſwifteſt ſpeed vnto their Lord to tell:
How euilly their ſport that day did ſpeed,
Which newes they knew would nothing pleaſe him well:
But well or ill, there was no remedie,
The King was gone paſt their recouerie.

To Lancaſter, where then Lord Haſtings lay,
The King made thither with all ſpeed he might:
From thence, aſſur'd of friends, he tooke his way
To London, whence (although his cauſe was right)
He was enforc'd to Lin to ſhape his courſe,
Of raging ſeas t'abide good hap or worſe.

To Burgondie with wind and ſaile he plide,
There to recouer forces, helpe and aide,
Of that great Duke: now marke what did betide,
The boiſterous waues and aduerſe winds delayd
His direct courſe: the Eaſterlings at ſea,
Thought to haue made K. Edwards ſhip their prey.

His ſhip being ſmall, with helpe of ſaile did beare,
Such forewind ſpeed, that in deſpite of foe,
It ranne ſo neare the ſhore, at Alquemare

Their ſhips drew deeper, that they could not go
So neare the towne, but were compeld to ride
At ancor there, attending the next tide.

In the meane time Lord Gronture gouernor,
In humbleſt maner welcomed the King,
And charg'd the Eaſterlings to touch no ſhore,
Commanding them not to attempt the thing,
That to the Engliſh might offenſiue be:
Thus was the King from dangerous foes ſet free.

But when the rumor through the land was blowne,
That Edward was inforc'd to flie the land:
And that the certaintie thereof was knowne,
O in what deſperate ſtate did all they ſtand
That were his friends! but vnto me his wife,
No hope was left of ſafetie, friends, or life.

Now to the hardeſt cenſure I appeale,
What world of woes oppreſt my ſoule with griefe:
How could I hide my ſorrowes, or conceale
My horror? for no hope of my reliefe,
On any ſide, I no way could deſcrie,
But gloomy death, and endleſſe miſerie.

Which ſad proſpect did threaten hard euent,
To wretched me, of all good hap forſaken:
Deſpaire attended me; no way I went,
But by ſad thoughts my thoughts were ouertaken.
Pale death my maſter was, and at my helme
Stood terror, all my ioyes to ouerwhelme.

In this red ſea which was not nauigable,
My weather-beaten barke was runne aground:
I thought to find ſome place auaileable,
Where I might ſtrike my ſaile, and not be drownd:
The ſanctuary a moſt ſacred place,
I fled vnto, hoping to find ſome grace.

Such grace I meane, as to a wretched ſoule
Yeelds comfort in extremes, neare drownd in griefe:
There willingly my ſelfe I did inrole
'Mongſt miſerable ſoules voide of reliefe:
But that the reuerence of that holy place,
Was a protection to them in that caſe.

And in that place I had not long remaind,
But to the world Edward the fift I brought:
Where like a poore mans child I not diſdaind
To haue him Chriſtned, though ſo meane a thought
Did nothing fit the mind of any Queene,
(Who chuſeth leaſt of ils we wiſe eſteeme,)

The pooreſt man, whoſe labour gets his pay,
Whoſe court a cottage is, doth at ſuch time,
More coſt beſtow on ſuch a ſolemne day,
Then I had meanes to giue that child of mine:
The Goſſips and chiefe credit of the troope,
Were th'Abbot, Prior, and the Lady Scroope.

Where was my cloth of ſtate, my canopie,
Ladies of honor to attend my will:
Where my rich hangings of rare tapeſtrie,

The ſtateliest banquets, that deuice or skill
Could ſet before vs: where the ſongs of mirth,
To tell the world, we ioyd a Princes birth:

My ſtate and grace, of all the world neglected,
Onely a naked name of Queene then left me:
My neareſt friends arreſted or ſuſpected,
With traitors blot, from which they were as free
As new borne babes, yet were they ouerthrowne;
Was euer ſuch a cruell tyrant knowne.

The troope of gallants, that once fawn'd on me,
My fortune-followers, now they all are gone:
My pompe and complements for my degree,
Are vaniſht cleane, and I am caſt vpon
The rocke, whereon alas I was vndone,
Before my prime of pleaſure was begun.

O all was gone, and I my ſelfe deiected
From Court and Crowne to fatall miſerie:
Of Lord nor Lady graced nor reſpected,
But headlong throwne into aduerſitie.
Oh let no creature liue ſecure of ſtate,
For Kings themſelues are ſubiects vnto fate.

Let meane mens wiues imagine what it is
To want things fitting them in ſuch a caſe:
I of all princely ornaments did miſſe,
Was glad of ſuch as ſeruile were and baſe:
Thus fortunes wheele, ſome vp, ſome downe doth toſſe,
And I enforc'd perforce did beare this croſſe.

O that I had a world of willing eares,
That patiently would heare my sorrowes told:
And in this sad discourse to lend me teares,
When they the map of my mishaps behold:
But ô the world shrowds in oblivion,
Their name and fame, that to the earth are gone.

My King was fled, my friends themselues did shrowd
Vnder the couert of my enemie:
The new made gouerner, insolent and proud,
Hatefull to me, and all my progenie:
Ten thousand deaths, yea trebled mischefe fall
Vpon his head, that sowrd my sweet with gall.

Nay more then so, that wrongd not onely me,
But to their King were instruments of ill:
Cursed and odious let such traitors be,
That howsoeuer to effect their will,
Regardlesse of all wrong, against all right,
Dares to take armes against their King to fight.

So long, too long, with small or no regard,
I in that sanctuary did remaine,
Vntill at length for certaine truth I heard,
That princely Edward, with a martiall traine,
At Rauensprugh neare Humber head was landed,
With many a gallant warlikly attended.

Which how it ioyd my soule, no tongue can tell:
Then vnto God I did deuoutly pray,
To cast all Edwards foes as low as hell,

And giue to him a safe victorious day,
That he in triumph, with hearts ioy might see
His litle sonne presented him by me,

Whether my prayers were effectuall,
Or Edwards valor, which the world renown'd:
But all his foes got such a heauie fall,
That he with victory againe was crown'd,
And many slaine; the rest that reattempted
Rebellious factions, they such faults repented.

Warwicke and others of that traiterous faction,
Being slaine and ouerthrowne, a iust reward
For them that dealt in such rebellious action; (mard:
Their peacocks plumes were pluckt, their brauerie
Victorious Edward by the helpe of heauen,
Reign'd after this, of yeares iust eleuen.

But then, ô then, for seldome good things last,
Fates enuious of earthly creatures good,
With swiftest speed, and with a heedlesse haste,
Cruell in action, glut themselues in bloud
Of any one that cometh next to hand:
All men perforce within their furie stand.

But Atropos the cruellst of the three,
That spins and winds, and cuts our threed of life,
As one inchanted, seeing did not see,
When she did cut the threed that bred such strife:
For by his too soone death my woes began,
And tragicke fall of many a mightie man.

My forepaſt ſorrowes might be termed toyes,
And all my griefes were ioyes compard to this:
King Edward dide, with him dide all my ioyes,
And I was baniſht from all earthly bliſſe,
To the ſad tortures of an earthly hell,
The leaſt of all my woes no tongue can tell.

Seuen royall children to this King I bare,
Edward the fift, by treaſon murthered,
Richard his brother had a deadly ſhare,
For they were both together ſmothered:
Fiue daughters by this King I alſo had,
Woſe fortunes, ſome were good and others bad.

When palefac'd death had ſeiz'd vpon my King,
My Lord, my loue, the hope of all my ioy,
And by that ſtroake had blemiſht euery thing,
That might preſerue and keepe me from annoy:
The Nobles droopt, the common people mournd,
And all my hopes to ſad deſpaire were turnd.

Some ſparke of future good I hop'd to ſee,
Since to the Crowne my ſonne by due deſcent
Was heire apparent: but what ſtate ſo free,
But truſt in treaſon brings to hard euent:
Vſurping Richard ſuch a plot laid downe,
To work their deaths, and gain himſelf the Crowne.

Such fearfull thoughts my ſenſes ſo did fright,
That ſome miſhap I feared would befall
To the yong King: ſad viſions in the night

So troubled me, I could not sleepe at all:
Deuouring beasts, but most of all the Boare,
My tender child, me thought, with tusks did goare.

From Ludlow towards London the yong King
Did go to haue his right, the royall Crowne:
Litle suspecting trechery would spring,
Nor that his vnkle Gloc'ster would put downe
The lawfull King, the sonne of his owne brother;
But tyrannie regards ne one ne other.

To heape more sorrowes on my wounded heart,
My brother the Lord Riuers was arrested:
Sir Richard Gray and Vaughan bare a part,
As guiltie of the fact, which they detested:
Whilst in Northampton in their Inne they stayed,
Vnwares alas they guiltlesse were betrayed.

The keyes of all the doores were safely kept
By those that sought to worke their ouerthrow;
Whilst they nothing misdoubting, soundly slept,
Litle suspecting vndeserued woe
Would light on thē that to their Prince were loyal;
But truth by treason tript, nere comes to triall.

Gloc'ster and Buckingham, hauing effected
Their bloudy plots gainst such as were my friends;
A warrant was with speed by them directed,
To bring those prisoners to vntimely ends:
And from Northampton vnto Ponfret, they
Like lambes to slaughter led, were sent away.

Sir Richard Ratcliffe hauing the commiſſion
To him directed, that by ſuch a day
He ſhould be carefull, with all expedition,
Thoſe innocents moſt bloudily to ſlay:
He acted it without due courſe of lawes,
Or asking why, or what ſhould be the cauſe.

The cruell Dukes then poaſted with all ſpeed
To Stonyſtratford, where the King then lay:
The King, alas, not knowing of this deed,
Said, Where's my vnkle? what doth cauſe him ſtay?
Gloc'ſter replide, my kinred traitors were,
As by due proofe his Maieſtie ſhould heare.

Saying, they had conſpir'd to rule the State,
To ouerthrow the Nobles of the land,
To rule the King, and giue him the checke mate;
All the Nobilitie in great feare did ſtand
Of them that had of late bene too much grac'd,
And now high time they ſhould be all diſplac'd.

And that the Lord Gray, brother to the King,
And with the King in preſence at that time,
Might well be charged with the ſelfe ſame thing;
Thus did they plot the fall of me and mine.
The King replide, that iuſtly he might ſweare,
His brother Gray was innocent and cleare.

And with thoſe words, teares trickled from his eies;
But though that ſight was pitifull to ſee,
It nought reclaimd them from their cruelties.

What sadder signe of griefe could euer be,
Then that a King, whose word should be a law,
With teares should plead, as though he stood in aw?

My father and my brethren murthered,
In this might well be seene the future hap,
Of ill presaged fortune furthered,
By those two bloudie Dukes, that sought to wrap
In sad despaire and death, me and my friends,
And bring vs quickly to vntimely ends.

When I had heard of this vnlookt for lot,
This vndeserued cruelties inflicted
Vpon my brother, who without all spot
Had cleare remaind, and could not be conuicted
Of any one conceiued thought of ill
Against his King, in heart, in mind or will.

Vnto the Sanctuary then I fled,
My friends and children I did take with me:
To scape their hands that sought our blouds to shed,
Cleare out of hope that euer I should see
My son receiue the Crowne; my feare prou'd true,
Which shortly after I had cause to rue.

The litle King was brought vnto the Tower,
As surest place of safetie for his person:
Accursed be that day and fatall hower,
That ere he entred there: for his subuersion
Was by the Dukes in cruell fashion wrought,
When least of death, alas, he had a thought.

And to cut off Edwards posteritie
From sitting in their Fathers regall seate,
My yonger sonne with me in Sanctuarie,
They plotted how they might by false deceit
Take him from me, that to augment my paine,
Euen at one instant they might both be slaine.

Which to effect, the Cardinall was sent
To deale with me, to get my second sonne
Into their hands, which deed I now repent:
I thought full litle that they would haue done,
In action or in thought the smallest thing,
That any way might preiudice their King.

The Cardinall alledg'd the Kings desire
To haue his brother in his companie:
And that it kindled had the Noble sire,
That I should doubt, or be in iealousie
Of them that were the rulers of the land,
And were allide to them in natures band.

I not denide, but that I thought it fit,
For brethren then in their minoritie
To be together, if that were onely it,
That caused them of the nobilitie
To wish to haue my sonne sent to his brother,
That they might sport and play one with another.

My trembling heart did inwardly so quake,
That I did feare, as then I knew not what:
My inward thoughts enforc'd my ioynts to shake,

As fearing this, and then misdoubting that:
But what to feare, alas I could not tell,
But that my sonne was sickly, and not well.

I told the Card'nall, that not long before,
A dangerous sicknesse had afflicted him,
And that cold aire would aggrauate it more;
And therefore I being neareſt of his kin,
Was fitteſt yet to keepe him there with me,
For then his mother who could dearer be?

And to the Card'nall I with teares did say,
Recall to mind my Lord, the grace and loue,
The King my husband gaue you many yeares,
As by experience you did daily proue:
Requite that loue to his posteritie,
When moſt you thinke them in extremitie.

And as I here deliuer vnto you
This litle Duke, the brother to your King:
If you to him hereafter proue vntrue,
Reſt moſt assur'd that such a hainous thing
Shall euer be a blemish to your fame,
And vtterly extinguish your good name.

And though perhaps you thinke my words are vaine,
And that I vndertake a needleſſe taske,
To giue aduice, where I should entertaine
Your sacred counsell: and of you should aske,
What I should do in such a case as this,
Whereon depends the hope of all my bliſſe.

The ſacred reuerence, and the great eſteeme
I beare to you, forbids me to miſtruſt
Your loyaltie, and yet you muſt not deeme
My feare is cauſleſſe, my miſdoubts vniuſt:
For many men to gaine themſelues a Crowne,
Haue bene regardleſſe whom they did caſt downe.

But you vpon your ſoule do here proteſt,
You will defend, to th'vtmoſt of your power,
My ſonnes, if any ſeeme them to moleſt.
Their yeares are yong, yet ſpringing is their flower;
Long may they liue, increaſe of ioyes to ſee:
It fits them die that old and withered be.

I know you may, and doubt not but you will
Be a ſtrong ſtay to the vnſure eſtate
Of both my ſonnes: if any ſeeke to ſpill
Their blouds, you may in time preuent the hate,
And crueltie of ſuch, if you haue care,
With watchfull eye for to diſcerne the ſnare.

Since on your truſt I do my hopes repoſe,
And all my future good doth now rely
On the performance of your vowes and oathes,
Feare ſtill the worſt, leſt all too ſuddenly
Their deaths be wrought; ô let no foule corruption
Make you conſent to innocents deſtruction.

Yet ſince the King and Councell did require,
And ſent for him, I would not ſay them nay,
But gaue conſent to that they did deſire:

And to the Cardinall, without longer ſtay,
My litle ſonne I gaue, and with a kiſſe
Tooke leaue of him, and of all earthly bliſſe.

Whole ſeas of teares did ouerflow my face,
Griefe ſtopt my tongue, I could not ſpeake at all:
The little child diſtild ſalt teares apace,
And on his mothers name he oft did call:
I was chiefe mourner, he to beare a part,
Sent ſighs and teares from his lamenting heart.

Richard the third.

When thus the Boare had ſeiz'd into his hand,
Them whom he thought were obiects in his way,
He did not long in doubtfull cenſure ſtand,
But fell to action without all delay,
Foreknowing well that he that acts an euill,
Muſt neither thinke on God, nor feare the deuill.

And hauing found a meanes and inſtrument,
That dared ſpeake vntruths in any thing:
One Doctor Shaw, with ſcandalous intent,
Preach'd at Pauls croſſe, that my deceaſſed King
A baſtard was, vnlawfully begotten:
What hel-hound would ſuch infamie haue ſpoken?

And that the Duke then being but Protector,
He was the perfect picture of his father;
And therefore he was true and right ſucceſſor
Vnto the Crowne: the heaters ſtraight did gather
The falſhood of the words that he did teach;
And went their way, & wold not heare him preach.

And with his tongue, the touchſtone of defame,
He moſt vntruly there to them did ſay,
My children baſtards were: thus voide of ſhame,
He ſought to worke the ruine and decay
Of me and mine: ô let his ſoule in hell,
For euermore in endleſſe torments dwell.

And more then that, if more then that may be,
Let thoſe that liue of his poſteritie,
Hatefull to all, of high or low degree,
Leade odious liues in depth of miſerie, (light:
Where neither Sunne nor Moone may giue them
Loe this ſhall be my prayer day and night.

But whither wade I now? I muſt not rage,
Though extreame griefe doth make my heart to vexe,
And paſſe decorum for a penſiue ſtage,
It's but the imperfection of my ſexe:
A woman hath no meanes to right her wrong,
But by the ſharpe and bitterneſſe of tongue.

Which if too much I ſeeme herein to vſe,
Condemne me not, but paſſion that doth cauſe
Me thus the bounds of mildneſſe to refuſe,
And vſe my tongue, the weapon of our lawes,
And ſcourge for them that wrongfully offend vs,
And onely refuge left for to defend vs.

When this was bruted by this ſlandering Doctor,
And that with baſtardie my blond was tainted:
For he was fit to be the diuels Proctor,

Or

Or tell a tale of Belſabub new painted,
By ſome magitian lately came from hell:
Such fained things he ſpared not to tell.

Then did vſurping Richard claime the Crowne,
And by the helpe of Buckingham he gaind
The regall Seate, not caring who went downe,
So he might hit the marke whereat he aimd:
The Crowne by bloud and tyrannie he won,
To friend or foe regardleſſe what was done.

Yet though King Richard did deſire to ſee
The death of both my children, whom he thought
Did dim his title to the Crowne; yet he
Could not deuiſe by whom to haue it wrought:
The fact ſo odious was, that neuer any
Would vndertake it, though he proued many.

New meanes to trie, a letter was directed
To him that was Lieutenant of the Tower,
One Brackenbury, that as he reſpected
King Richards fauour, at the inſtant hower
And ſight thereof, he then with ſpeed ſhould ſlay
The two yong Princes, without all delay.

Sir Robert Brackenbury hauing read
The letter, he did preſently reply,
Their bloud ſhould neuer by his meanes be ſhed,
Though for refuſing he were ſure to die.
Which anſwer when the King did heare, he then
Did deeply ſweare, there was no truſt in men.

I ſee

I see, quoth he, this world is full of euill,
Promotions soone forgotten, fauors vaine:
I would haue sent my man vnto the deuill,
But he will giue me leaue to take that paine
My selfe: but yet I hope to find some friends,
That will not faile to bring them to their ends.

And at the last he did find out a mate,
No man, a monster of some tygers kind,
Hoping to raise by crueltie his state,
When he perceiu'd King Richards bloudy mind,
Voide of all grace, possest with villanie,
Offerd himselfe to worke their tragedie.

But now prepare your eares to heare the sound
Of saddest woe, and extreame crueltie:
Was euer such a bloudy butcher found,
That euer dared act such tyrannie,
As was this traitor, Terrill was his name,
That gaue consent to worke his Princes bane:

A strict command, the King by Terrill sent
To Brackenbury, charging him thereby,
That all the keyes he should incontinent
Deliuer vp to Terrill willingly,
For that one night he did the King obay,
Yeeld the keyes, and sadly went his way.

Night being come, that shrowdeth many a sinne
From eyes of men, but not from sight of God:
He knowes the thoughts before the deeds begin,

And will reuenge and punish with his rod,
Without respect of persons, all alike:
The mightiest King he will in iustice strike.

Into the Tower by secret dores that night,
Terrill with such as were wrought to his will,
Forrest and Dighton entered by slight
Into their chamber, resolute to kill
The sleeping Princes, who being voide of feare,
Did litle thinke their deaths had bene so neare.

And when the Princes both within one bed
Together slept, embracing one the other,
Those cruell villaines by the diuell led,
The litle brethren in their beds did smother:
Thus from the sleepe that nature forc'd them to,
They neuer wak'd to tell who wrought their wo.

Whether in water, or in sacred ground,
They cast or laid the bodies murthered,
It's yet vnknowne, the place was neuer found,
But in their beds they thus were smothered:
O neuer villaines acted such a deed,
The thought wherof doth make my soule to bleed.

This murther done, this most detested fact,
Being once performed by that damned crew,
Vpon the litle Princes; Terrill packt,
And like some fury to the Court he flew,
The maner how, vnto the King to tell,
And euery accident as it befell.

They

They had no wounds, by which it might appeare,
That violently so their blouds were shed:
But as by natures course they perisht were,
And that their bodies being scarcely dead,
Vnder a paire of stayres within the Tower,
Were cast a prey for Serpents to deuoure.

The bloudy King was pleased with the deed,
But did dislike the baseneſſe of the place,
Where they had cast the bodies, and with speed,
Terror of conscience, or some sparke of grace
Did worke remorse in him, and therefore he
Gaue charge their bodies should remoued be.

But whither, where, or to what place assign'd,
No history doth to this age relate:
A Priest, some say, their bodies there did find,
And mou'd with pitie, did commiserate,
Such royall babes of life and Crowne bereft,
Should in so vile a filthy place be left.

And did remoue them, where he thought more fit
And sacred place for princely obsequies:
Which reu'rent deed deserueth to be writ
In golden letters, that posterities
May learne of him, that Christians ought to haue
A decent place to lay their dead in graue.

Then if a generall regard be had
Of those that die, although they be but such, (bad:
Whose births were base, whose liues were thought but

The honor due to Princes is ſo much,
As gods on earth they honor'd ought to be
Of all eſtates, of high or low degree.

When I had heard of this extremeſt ill,
Griefe ſtopt my ſpeech, ſorrowes oppreſt my heart:
I was enforc'd, although againſt my will,
From all delights and pleaſures to depart,
Nothing was left but ſorrow, griefe and care,
Thus all my hope was turned to ſad deſpaire.

Let neuer heauens yeeld ſuch a chearfull ſmile,
That may yeeld comfort to that damned ſoule,
That did not feare to do a deed ſo vile;
Let helliſh furies, all their names inrole
In that blacke book, which to augment their paine,
As record of their deeds doth ſtill remaine.

Let vgliеſt ſhape of moſt abhorred deuill,
Fire-ſpitting fiends in that infernall lake,
Dayly torment them that deuiſde this euill,
Or gaue conſent, or the leaſt part did take,
To murther him that was their lawfull King,
And crop his flower, whilſt it was in the ſpring.

To breake the branch that did but newly bud:
Nay more then ſo, to plucke vp by the roote,
The ſpringing plant next of the royall bloud:
Though this to tell my griefe, is little boote,
And all in vaine I do my woes repleate,
Becauſe in me all ſorrowes are compleate.

Yet needs I muſt, nature enforceth me,
I was their mother, they the royall ſeed
Of my deare Lord, whom yet me thinkes I ſee
Vrging reuenge for this moſt wicked deed;
And ſhall not I with him ſtill beare a part,
In prayer, in woe, in ioy, or griefe of heart?

O needs I muſt, and euer gladly will
Follow his ghoſt, with ſeruiceable loue,
And euermore be preſt and ready ſtill,
With ſighes and teares t'importune mightie Ioue,
To grant the prayers of my beloued King,
For his deſires were iuſt in euery thing.

If more I ſpeake then well becometh me,
In curious eye and eare if I too farre
Forget my ſelfe, let this my anſwer be,
He was my glorious Sun, no twinkling ſtarre:
They that on earth do beare the Scepter royall,
To them their ſubiects hearts ought to be loyall.

Then if a ſubiect muſt adore his King,
If he that is the King of Kings, command
Faith, dutie, loue, of all in euery thing
To be performd, if firme his act ſhall ſtand;
Why then much more ſhould I that was his wife,
Performe my dutie in and after life.

For after life the ghoſt hath libertie,
Of ioyes or griefe to beare a feeling part:
And though ſome women through infirmitie,

Their frailtie or their ficklenesse of heart,
When death once seizeth on their dearest friends,
Their former loues are quickly at an end:

Yet what of that, my thoughts were pitcht on hie,
I lou'd no meaner person then a King;
Then with his life why should my fancies die?
Why should succeeding ages after sing
To my reproch, that I that was a Queene,
In baser choice to sport was euer seene?

Richard the third, rightly cald th'vsurper,
Requited those that were his trustie friends
With sodaine death; and his deuice to further,
Plotted vntruths to bring them to their ends:
Then whē they thought their fortunes were at hiest,
Then was their woe their fall, and death the niest.

But good or bad, this tyrant being King,
Who so he hated, or did stand in doubt,
Would not consent to him in euery thing,
To take their liues, all wayes he cast about,
By sodaine action, or surmisde pretence,
Without their heads he sent them packing thence.

In this extreame, alas, what way was left
For wretched me, but to despaire and die?
Of hope and hap, of friends and all bereft,
What should I do, or whither should I flie?
But still in danger of my mortall foe,
To wish for death the end of earthly woe.

Two yeares he reign'd in feare and bloudie ſtrife,
In which meane time in Sanctuarie I
Did ſhroud my ſelfe, to ſaue my wretched life,
And linger out my dayes in miſeric:
Though death farre better was in ſuch a caſe,
My womans heart could hardly death embrace.

His breach of faith, his odious cruelties,
Firſt cauſed Buckingham to leuie armes:
And in the North it cauſed mutinies,
Men ſought to 'venge the many grieuous harmes,
That wrongfully they ſaw him dayly do
To all eſtates, as well to friend as foe.

This made Earle Richmond find ſo many friends,
When he layd claime vnto the Engliſh Crowne:
Who doth not wiſh all tyrants ſpeedie ends?
Who will not helpe to caſt a tyrant downe?
The King of Kings that all mens acts doth ſee,
Will neuer let ſuch men vnpuniſht be.

Not long before Earle Richmond came to ſhore,
King Richard ſent to me, perſwading men
To make excuſe for what was done before,
With promiſes of gracious proffers then:
They layd long ſiege vnto my weake defence,
With vowes and oaths to cleare him from offence.

With kindeſt promiſes of future good,
To me of any one that I could name:
I well conſidering in what caſe I ſtood,

Grew

Grew milder, and at last did seeme to frame
My selfe as pliant to their masters will,
Yet was my heart free from one thought of ill.

The Eagle towring in the loftie skie,
If he vnto his prey do kindnesse vse,
Vnder whose stroake their life or death doth lie:
Were it not madnesse in them to refuse
His profferd fauour, since they must obay
His will, because they cannot scape away?

Such was my case, although not so considered:
He was the Eagle that was mounted hie,
I and my friends the prey discomforted,
Stood at his will to liue or else to die;
Our safeties he did proffer, gold and loue,
I was content our better haps to proue.

He did desire, but that I would conceiue
A good opinion of his deeds to come,
And not my selfe so fondly to deceiue,
Mistaking things that then were past and done:
Alas, I knew it was then in his power,
To date our liues one day, or but an hower.

My secret foes, if any such there were,
They knew, or at the least they might haue knowne,
I wisht Earle Richmond well, and ioyd to heare
That Richards state should soone be ouerthrowne:
I did procure my friends, with power and will,
To aide the Earle, King Richards bloud to spill.

Which

Which though in ſecret to my friends I ſaid,
I durſt not but ſeeme pleaſed to forgiue
All former faults, although in heart I praid,
That cruell Richard might no longer liue
To bathe in bloud: full oft on bended knee,
With teares I praid, that I his death might ſee.

What ſhould I hold you in a long diſcourſe?
Faire words preuaild, and I did giue conſent;
Knowing our fortunes hardly could be worſe,
I with my daughters to his pallace went:
Where he did giue cõmand, and ſtraightly charge,
Our welcome ſhould be great, our freedome large.

I knew the time was neare, and then at hand,
That Henry Earle of Richmond meant to trie,
In warlike battell, with a valiant band,
Either to winne the Crowne, or elſe to die:
I knew what Noble men would take his part,
I gaind him friends, and gaue to his my heart.

I ioyd to heare that Richard loſt the field;
Who did not pray to ſee his ouerthrow?
He being ſlaine, who did not freely yeeld?
Each man was glad, and wiſht it might be ſo:
Of Yorke and Lancaſter then grew the vnion,
Whoſe former ſtrife wrought many mens cõfuſion.

The conquering King, according to his oath,
Was matried to my daughter preſently:
Which to helpe forward no man ſeemed loth,

But all were aiders, as fidelitie
Did bind them to performe: this being done,
I ioyd once more to haue a King my ſonne.

Foole that I was, to glorie in the thing
Which prou'd to me vnpleaſant in the end:
I like the ſwan, before my death did ſing,
As litle knowing what they did intend,
That ſecretly conſpir'd to worke my fall,
And ſodainly did turne my ſweete to gall.

Henry the 7. The ſecond yeare of this King Henries raigne,
The Councell did decree, that wretched I,
The more to aggrauate my griefe and paine,
Should loſe my lands, and liue in penurie,
Becauſe I did accept in outward ſhow,
Of Richards kindneſſe. They did litle know,

How eaſily a captiuated man,
Will yeeld to him that is his conqueror,
And gladly pleaſe in any thing he can,
The fury of a ſauage tormenter,
Eſpecially in ſuch a caſe as this,
Where wil might hurt, but could not help my wiſh.

I had too lately knowne his bloudy mind,
I was vnable to withſtand his force:
I knew no place of ſafetie where to find,
My ſtate was like to grow from bad to worſe:
Which made me willingly accept the good
That he did vow to me and to my blood.

Alas, what could a ſilly woman do?
My female frailtie might haue colourd this:
I feard to taſte the furie of my foe,
Becauſe my ſtrength was all too weake for his:
I timorouſly did feare the bloudie ſlaughters,
That he might do to me and to my daughters.

What hurt or danger to Earle Richmonds plot,
Could my diſſembled peace with Richard be?
What face ſo faire, but that a fault or ſpot,
A partiall Iudge will ſay, he there doth ſee?
It's better die, and not to liue at all,
Then be ſo weake, with euery blaſt to fall.

When I was grac'd with fauour of my King,
Whilſt he did liue that did ſupport and ſtay
Thoſe whom I pleaſde into his grace to bring,
All then was iuſt that I would do or ſay:
He being gone, and that I was declining,
At my eſtate how many were repining?

Had I bene cruell, couetous or ſtrange,
When poore diſtreſſed ſuters to me cride,
From good conceit to bad, then might they change:
Had I the needy naked ſoule denide
Of any helpe, that then was in my power,
Then had I liu'd too long, if but an hower.

But if my heart did pitie widowes teares,
The fatherleſſe if I did helpe to right,
And ſet the needie free from many feares,

Wherewith they were oppreſt by men of might:
To all eſtates ſince I was then a friend,
Why ſhould their gratefulneſſe ſo quickly end?

And more then ſo, not onely to forget
Good turnes once done, but to requite them ill,
That well deſeru'd of all in each reſpect;
So farre ſo blindly to be led by will,
Or vile ingratitude, the filthieſt ſinne,
That euer humane creatures liued in.

If this had hapned in a land vnknowne,
Where I had neuer liued as a Queene:
Had this bene done by any but my owne,
My griefes ſhould leſſe in all reſpects haue beene:
What made the mightie Cæſar wiſh to die?
The griefe that Brutus was his enemie.

I thought all ſtormes of miſery were paſt,
My daughter being married to the King;
I thought my pleaſures then would euer laſt,
I neuer lookt for any change of thing:
My innocencie would not let me feare,
The grieuous cenſure that was then ſo neare.

Bermondſey Abbey in Southwarke neare London

With wounded heart, the remnant of my dayes,
In th'Abbey of Bermondſey in teares I ſpent:
Still death I wiſht, and hated thoſe delayes,
That fearfull frailtie did to me preſent:
I cald for death, and weary was to liue,
For well I knew life could no pleaſures giue.

And when the end of all my griefes drew nie,
And that my date of life was neare expired,
With willing heart I was content to die:
And Atropos I earnestly desired,
To cut the threed that did prolong my life,
Because in me all sorrowes were so rife.

My corps being dead, to Windsor was conuaid,
And there interred fitting my degree,
Euen in that place where my deare Lord was laid,
There at this day the tombe is yet to see:
Vnto which place, now I my griefes haue told,
I must returne and shroud my selfe in mold.

Then did this Queene retutne vnto her rest,
And vanisht, leauing to my memorie
Here to relate what she to me rehearst:
In which recitall, if infirmitie
Cause me forget that which I should haue spoken:
Imagine that which I haue now forgotten.

If such the world in former times hath beene,
That highest states most subiect were to fall:
How true said she, that late was Englands Queene;
When she her selfe at that time was in thrall,
Loe yonder milk-maid liues more merrily,
Then I, that am of noble progenie:

It was the saying of Queene Elizabeth, when she was prisoner in the time of Queen Mary.

Not to be great, is therefore to be sure
From fortunes wracke: for this we dayly see,
The highest trees do sharpest stormes endure;

When thoſe that planted in the valley be,
Do ſeldome feare, and neuer feele the frowne
Of boiſterous ſtormes, that others doth caſt downe.

A vertuous life ſuruiues, when cruell death
Hath ſoule from earthly body ſeuered,
And hath bereft vs of our vitall breath,
Yet worthy deeds ſhould be remembered:
Succeeding ages ſhould them deifie,
Whoſe liues and deaths were full of pietie.

But what auaileth it to haue bene great,
Or what, to haue bene friendly vnto many?
When they ſhall come to ſit in ſorrowes ſeate,
Themſelues ſhall ſeldome be relieu'd by any:
For miſery hath many lookers on,
And ſome that pitie, but adiutors none.

This Queene was by deſcent of noble blood,
Of vertuous life: yet in obliuions graue,
How long hath ſhe in darke obſcureneſſe ſtood?
Shall good deſerts, ſuch cold requitall haue?
Vngratefull minds, that were by dutie bound,
Her name and fame vnto the world to ſound.

Queenes Colledge, which of her did take the name,
In Cambridge as a monument doth ſtand,
A worthy deed, deſeruing endleſſe fame;
VVhich to maintaine, ſhe gaue ſufficient land:
And ſome which in that Colledge haue bene bred,
Might wel haue raiſd her fame though ſhe be dead.

Thus

Thus haue you heard, although abruptly pend,
The fortunes of this Queene, and of her friends:
Princes as well as beggers do depend
On the Almighties will: what ere he ſends,
None can preuent, or alter his decree,
So firme, ſo ſure his ſecret iudgements be.

FINIS.